Critical & Analytical Essays

Deductive vis-à-vis Didactic: The Curious Case of Byomkesh Bakshi

Rajendrani Mukhopadhyay[1]

[1] UG Student (English Major), Suri Vidyasagar College, West Bengal, India, rajendranitua@gmail.com

Check for updates

Edited By: Amritanath Bhattacharya

Citation: Mukhopadhyay, Rajendrani. "Deductive vis-à-vis Didactic: The Curious Case of Byomkesh Bakshi" Poorvam International Journal of Creative Arts and Cultural Expressions, vol. 2, no. 1, June. 2026, pp. 165-179, Doi: 10.63752/pijcace.0201S08

Copyright:

© 2026 Rajendrani Mukhopadhyay. Published by Dhvani Publication in Poorvam International Journal of Creative Arts and Cultural Expressions. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use and distribution, provided the original work is properly cited and no derivatives are made.

Abstract:

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's immortal creation Byomkesh Bakshi stands apart from other conventional detective characters both in terms of benevolent understanding and humanitarian approach. His main objective is not merely to catch the culprit and bring him to justice, but to solve the crime and reach the crux of truth – famously identifying himself as 'satyanweshi' or the 'truth seeker'. Whereas other detective characters complete their cases with a successful investigation of the crime, Byomkesh as an 'inquisitor' goes beyond the limited understanding of crime and punishment. His perception of truth is not confined within the finite scope of justice – either with the recovery of stolen goods or exposing the culprit; but the circumstances in which the crime has been committed. This paper is a modest attempt to critically analyse select stories of Byomkesh series, where the deductive reasoning of sleuth becomes secondary to the didactic teachings he imparts on the characters as well as readers. Byomkesh advocates exceptional methods and often takes unorthodox decisions which set him apart from the stereotype of Western detective models. His realisation of truth is as well the journey of readers from ignorance to experience. This paper also interrogates whether the 'truth seeker' aspect of his persona overshadows his capability as a criminal investigator.

Keywords: truth, crime, justice, detective, punishment, case.

Byomkesh's rationale of truth goes beyond our limited perception of crime, punishment and justice. In many cases, Saradindu compels the readers to think that crime is not only the outcome of individual flaws and moral decrepitude, but often the

result of adverse circumstances and social oppression. In several of Byomkesh stories, the 'whodunnit' question becomes subsidiary to 'why' and 'how' the crime has been done. Byomkesh often lets the culprit go away from being arrested by police only to suffer greater punishment than judicial incarceration. In few cases, he even forgives the criminal and gives the person a second chance to rectify his misdeeds if it is found that the malefactor is not a habitual offender and his wrongdoings are result of his serious unfavourable predicaments. In other cases, he strives for the betterment of nation and society rather than achieving personal milestones or acquiring wealth and fame. Saradindu's Byomkesh is a 'bhadralok' detective who is "deeply embedded in the localized cultural expression of genteel urban Bengaliness" (Brueck 609). This expression is not only demonstrated in his white dhoti-panjabi attire, but also reimagined in spirit and character.

Sleuth as 'Satyanweshi': Questing Justice and Truth

Pinaki Roy in his book *The Manichean Investigators* (2008), suggests that "the peripheral position of Bengali detective fiction is changed to a new centrality . . . by constructing a subaltern nationality, class, caste and demeanour of the investigator" (54). This is indeed true if one does a close literary analysis of some of the stories. In "Quicksand" (1933), Byomkesh's sheer persistence to look into the case of Himangshu is crucial. Despite Ajit's uneasiness at the hesitation of Himangshu to let them stay at his residence, Byomkesh insisted that they "must stay here" (142). He suspects a major crime behind the sudden missing of Baby's tutor Harinath and decides to uncover the truth which reflects his true character as a 'satyanweshi' or 'truth seeker'. This is a divergence from the general behaviour of a professional detective as his interest is driven by the urge to discover the 'larger' truth behind what apparently seemed like an ordinary theft case. Even while talking to Ajit about Anadi Sarkar's daughter Radha, Byomkesh is perceived in a completely different light. He stresses on the insensibility of the rigid societal structures in being merciful to the widowed women. Here Byomkesh's voice is that of an empathetic observant who is pained at the tragic fate of Radha and is deeply considerate of the hardships faced by the young widows of contemporary society. Moreover, his remark, "women are the

bitterest enemies of their own sex" (162) highlights a vital social irony: the oppressed becomes the agents of oppression, dismantling the simplistic binary of male oppressor and female victim. Here Byomkesh points out how patriarchal values get internalized and the women themselves enforce the same harsh principles on other women, perpetuating judgment without consideration. Another profoundly humane aspect of Byomkesh's character is unfolded through his genuine admiration of Himangshu as a 'perfect gentleman'. He is deeply respectful towards Himangshu as he is able to find a chink of compassion in the stone wall of harsh rules of the society. Amidst conservative norms that disgraces widows and restrict their freedom, Himangshu, according to Byomkesh, stands as progressive and incomparable in character. This becomes the main reason why Byomkesh considers it a moral duty to help this kind of a great man and asserts that they "should solve this case" (162) to relieve Himangshu from the troubles he is going through.

The idea of retributive justice is vehemently expressed through the final act of Kaligati's encounter and death at the hands of Himangshu. One exceptional occurrence to be noticed here – Satyanweshi himself assumes the role of a 'passive' murderer by utilizing Himangshu's skills to shot Kaligati dead. Byomkesh could visually construct the entire plan made for the cruel murder of Harinath and the terrible death of that innocent master shook him to the core. Therefore, the only mode of justice he could think of imparting to Kaligati was death, embodying the belief of cosmic or ethical balance, where sin invites retribution, "A tooth for a tooth, an eye for an eye" (167). By reminding Himangshu of this statement, a complex, morally reflective side of Byomkesh is shown, where he points out that Himangshu acted as an instrument to mete out justice, which was indispensable. Here Byomkesh's role transcends from an ordinary detective who solves the crime to an agent of truth who delivers cosmic justice.

Another distinctive feature of Saradindu's Byomkesh is that he not only investigates a crime but also considers the circumstances which compelled a person to commit the crime. In *Aadim Ripu* (1955), upon learning about Anadi Haldar's iniquitous actions and his perverted desire for his son's would-be-

bride Sheuli, Byomkesh readily acknowledges that Probhat's wrath and retaliation was just and fair, "Anadi Haldar did such a thing which could cause even the most harmless ones to burst with murderous rage" (my trans.; 98). The identity and motive of the murderer was already revealed to Byomkesh even before he headed for Patna; but the usual promptness which is shown by him in other cases was surprisingly missing here. This accounts to Probhat's careful inspection of character which induced Byomkesh to view him through the eyes of mercy. This is again a striking deviation from the usual mode of operation that a detective undertakes in his investigation process. Byomkesh being a 'satyanweshi' does not merely identify the murderer, but also analyses the greater truth behind the incentive of the murder. This is further prominent when he admits that he is relieved from the onerous obligation of rendering a condign punishment to Probhat for his unethical killings, "I am freed from a tough responsibility" (my trans.; 92).

At the end, Byomkesh's unflinching resolve to burn down the entire sum of black money into ashes displays the most remarkable attribute of his personality – an unwavering commitment towards moral virtue. In the context of Anadi Sarkar's murder case, the money represents an unending cycle of greed and moral decay and can be rightly regarded as the 'root of all evils'. The immolation therefore delineates a kind of spiritual cleansing or inner-purification depicting a sacred beginning on the auspicious occasion of India's long-awaited freedom. Moreover, Byomkesh's exceptional act of setting the notes ablaze resembles a daring ritual (*yajna)* of sacrificing one of the most precious attachments of mankind to *agni* (Hindu deity of fire), "Byomkesh looked at our face and smiled. . . . Then chanted in a deep voice, 'Swaha, Swaha, Swaha'" (my trans.; 100). On the other hand, Ajit's reluctance in letting go of the tainted money symbolizes the average middle-class mindset that is confined to a certain boundary and cannot go beyond that limit. Byomkesh, on the contrary, is able to surpass that parochial way of thinking and align himself with a much higher idealism that is rooted in a deep sense of nationalism, "Today, on this propitious hour, this will be our offering at the feet of the Nation Mother" (my trans.; 100). Furthermore, this breaks the previous notion of Ajit where he

doubted Byomkesh for being immoral in accepting the bribe of five hundred rupees and thus hits upon the ultimate realisation of Byomkesh's ethical superiority when he effortlessly does what seemed to him as unthinkable. The earlier disagreement with Ajit regarding the acceptance of the bribe of five hundred rupees from lawyer Kaminikanto depicts the practicality of Byomkesh. He admits that it would be foolish to spend money from his own pocket to carry on the investigation. This shows that Byomkesh understands the need of financial income as a private investigator. The dissension further establishes him as a man not bound by impractical moral codes but rather guided by rational and logical thoughts.

An unparalleled dimension of Byomkesh's persona is exhibited through the dialogue between him and Probhat before the sunrise of 15th August, 1947. Byomkesh's recognition of the fact that no blood is left unstained exemplifies a broader perspective where complexity of human character is acknowledged instead of imposing blind judgement. The birth of independent India signifies not only political freedom but also Probhat's self-liberation – emancipation from the burden of his crime. Byomkesh himself constructs for him a passage from sin to salvation, transgression to redemption. But to a 'satyanweshi' this redemption cannot happen without the complete realisation of truth, on account of which he reveals to Probhat his paternal identity. Here again, Byomkesh imparts cosmic justice to Probhat by denying him the comfort of ignorance. The revelation itself becomes a lifelong psychological burden and a punishment more cruel than death. By the irony of fate, the man for whom Probhat harboured deep hatred turned out to be his own father and his cruel fate endowed him with the ineradicable sin of patricide. At the dawn of independence, Byomkesh's encouraging words ushers a new hope into Probhat which further reinforces the idea that humans are capable of rising above their weaknesses through moral strength and unyielding courage, "There is a custom in all civilised countries that prisoners are freed on auspicious days. You are freed too" (my trans.; 100). Hence, Byomkesh here renders his own way of justice and punishment outside the framework of judicial system.

"Rakter Daag" (1956) serves as another example where Byomkesh forgives the murderer (Ushapatibabu) as the victim (Satyakam) was himself a culprit and serious offender. The impudent, flamboyant and womanizer Satyakam portrays the elite circles of post-independent Calcutta standing in contrast to the disciplined middle-class society, which includes Byomkesh and Ajit. A close scrutiny of this story depicts that Satyakam's impending and unavoidable death is a kind of 'rule of law' governed by the moral codes that Saradindu usually abides by in his Byomkesh series. Since Satyakam had crossed all limits of dissoluteness, it was necessary to eliminate him in order to establish justice and peace for the truly decent Ushapatibabu. The mention of Bhuteshwar's fitness club and Byomkesh extending support in their plan of beating up Satyakam to teach a befitting lesson can be perceived as the last humanist resort to restrain and safeguard him. Byomkesh said, "If a few blows can save his life, isn't that better?" (my trans.; 165). The wilful forgiveness rendered by Byomkesh upon Ushapatibabu is the pivotal element of "Rakter Daag" that allows one to dive straight into the unexplored corridors of Byomkesh's persona. It firmly establishes the unrivalled supremacy of probity when viewed through the lens of a 'satyanweshi'. Ushapatibabu is undeniably the criminal and deserves strict punishment in accordance to legal rules; but to Byomkesh his action is carried out as a repercussion to prolonged mental torture and distress. Satyakam's outrageous actions and unbearable harassment forced him to take the extreme step of murder. For many years, Ushapatibabu was desperately searching for mental peace and finally got the opportunity to embrace a 'new beginning' with his wife. From Byomkesh's understanding of the truth of life, Ushapatibabu in no way deserves all those troubles and misfortunes that came upon him and is therefore the rightful claimant to what he desires. Byomkesh himself being a family man comprehends the paramount importance of marital bliss and contentment in Ushapati's miserable life. His action is guided by the noble doctrine of righteousness than being solely driven by legal codes, "But there is something greater than law—righteousness. What do you all think. Have I done something wrong?" (my trans.; 187).

The peculiar case in "Kahen Kobi Kalidas" (1961) is another instance where Byomkesh again forgives the murderer. Going against adultery and infidelity, Saradindu offers an indirect support for the fierce loyalty shown by the couple Bhubaneshwar-Mohini towards each other. The extent to which a husband goes to protect his wife's honour is clearly evident in this story. There is an explicit deviation from the traditional nature of detective story when Byomkesh completely sided with the murderers while sorrowfully stating how the evil Pranhori destroyed their innocent lives. Here, readers can definitely find out a similar kind of retributive justice as obvious in previous stories like *Aadim Ripu* and "Rakter Daag" where Byomkesh himself validates the killing of extremely wicked individuals as rightful act according to the code of moral justice; not as a sleuth, but as a 'satyanweshi'.

In "The Rhythm of Riddles" (1964), Bhupeshbabu's revelation about the loss of his only son adds a tragic dimension to the detective narrative. Mentioning of the Dhaka riots in his mournful expression places his grief within a larger dimension of the devastating impact of communal violence. Bhupeshbabu's plaintive question: "Is there a medicine to wipe out memories of grief?" (21) elucidates his desperate longing for relief from the excruciating pain that he constantly bears. Byomkesh, who usually relies on logic and reason, is confronted by a problem that cannot be solved by usual means. His reply sheds light on a compassionate father within him who deeply realizes the magnitude of such a severe agony, "Eternity is the only medicine" (21). In this case, the deliberate concealment of Natabar's murderer to the police exhibits an insightful perspective of Byomkesh's humanitarian outlook. To him, Natabar Nashkar is none other than a criminal who has terribly destroyed several innocent lives and continues to do so. Therefore, Byomkesh views his murder as cleansing of an invasive weed from the society, which is undoubtedly a noble deed. In Byomkesh's worldview, there is no mercy for the grave sin committed by Nashkar in snatching away a child from his parents. Bhupeshbabu's act of revenge is therefore considered as morally justified since he happens to be a bereaved father who had lost his son and sought vengeance at the right time. This gets reflected through Byomkesh's reassuring words, "I believe no one should hang for killing a vulture either. You need not worry" (36). In this

case too, Byomkesh lets the culprit go away since he is not a habitual offender but a grief-stricken father who exerts justice for his son's murder.

The Nationalist Byomkesh: Partition and Beyond

The character of Byomkesh "demonstrated the feasibility of a rapprochement between the local and the global, in an attempt at bridging the chasm between the seemingly divergent demands of a late-colonial South Asian ideational, more than socio-historical, anomie and the burgeoning aspiration of decolonisation" (Chakrabarti 266). The politics of India in the 1950s is marked by a series of unstable factors and equations – the Partition of 1947 and shifting of national boundaries, rise of communal identity, refugee crisis and violent wars. Saradindu has reiterated these geo-political issues in many of his Byomkesh stories including *Aadim Ripu*, "Rakter Daag", "The Rhythm of Riddles", "Mogno Mainak" etc. In *Aadim Ripu*, the reference to the communal riots of 1946 places the plot of the novel in a politically turbulent environment. The killing of Ajit's bosom friend Fazlu amidst the mass violence depicts the fact that no one was spared from the devastating fire that partition lit. Hence, Ajit is not merely a narrator but also a silent observer of the intense chaos that India went through at that time. The quote "we became to love the god of death" (my trans.; 17) displays the grim picture of the massacre of thousands of Hindus by the goons of Muslim League during Jinna's 'direct action' in Kolkata on 16th August, 1946. The utter negligence of police administration in protecting the lives and rights of Hindus is sharply criticized through Ajit's remark, "Suhrawardy saheb's police arrives and punishes the Hindus, the number of dead bodies increases by a few" (my trans.; 17). Again, the nonchalant attitude of the police jamadar towards Nripen at the news of Anadi Sarkar's murder is worth noticing. His heartless advice to throw away Anadi's dead body on the road showcases the same mindset of turning a blind eye to the plight of the Hindus.

> There was nobody in the police station. One jamadar was sleeping keeping his leg on the table. He got furious after hearing my complaint and said, "Get out! What's all the fuss about when a Hindu has died? Dump the corpse in the street. (my trans.; 36)

During these riots and mayhem, Byomkesh had to remain separated from his wife Satyabati and his toddler son, who are kept at Patna in Sukumar's safe custody. Hence, Byomkesh is not an intellectual who is detached from society but a middle-class family man directly affected by socio-political upheavals. Thus, with regards to family and marriage, "Byomkesh is a little dissimilar to other popular detectives who are not tied by familial bonds. He also ages with time in subsequent stories" (Sinha 180).

In "Rakter Daag", the character of Shitangshu is a symbolic representation of the psychological fragmentation and dehumanization caused by the communal violence of 1947. He is reduced from a well-mannered young boy to a vindictive individual who counterbalances the act of violence by killing those Muslims who had murdered his father.

> Bhabanibabu smiled a bit, ". . .He was a good guy, but the Muslims killed his father during the riot last year. From then on, his nature changed. We suspect that he committed no fewer than three murders". (my trans.; 173)

Later in the story, Shitangshu's cold demeanour in fearlessly replying to Byomkesh about his murder weapon reveals a staunch determination and conviction about his reprisal for the unjust killing of an innocent man.

Gautam Chakrabarti suggests that, "Byomkesh was lionized as an intersectional figure, at once Anglophilic and 'crypto-nationalist', navigating between traditional cultural ideals and a postcolonial modernity" (261). However, Laura Brueck argues that Saradindu maintains "a balance between a formal Holmesian Anglophilia and a vernacular setting and political sensibility" (607). A meticulous study of his stories reflects that Byomkesh happens to be a patriotic citizen who often dedicates himself to the national cause. In *Aadim Ripu*, a patriotic fervour is invoked by Saradindu when Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel summons Byomkesh to Delhi. This again correlates the story with the unstable political situation of contemporary India where the nation was torn between ongoing freedom struggle and sinister conspiracies aimed at destabilizing national integrity. The motive behind Patel's call

remains undescribed, but Ajit hints that it is related with India's national security and not any petty criminal investigation. The utmost significance of responding to national interest as one's foremost duty is well exhibited through Byomkesh's urgent departure from Patna. The secrecy is maintained while depicting what actually happened in Delhi and it serves as Ajit's inescapable duty as a responsible citizen in ensuring national security. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is regarded as 'The Iron Man of India' and therefore embodies the 'iron will' of unifying a nation marked by differences in language, culture and religion. Associating a fictional figure like Byomkesh with a historical figure like Patel represents Saradindu's conscious effort in establishing his sleuth, Byomkesh, as a nationalist dedicated to the cause of united India. In "Dushtochokro" (1963), another patriotic aspect of Byomkesh's character is revealed when he transforms the punishment of the culprits into charity and welfare. The strict condition given to Bishupal for donating one lakh rupees to the defence fund within a day highlights Byomkesh's patriotic spirit and his steadfast moral uprightness. Upon realising that the culprits cannot be proven guilty in court, he thinks of employing their lucre for national cause instead of demanding for himself. This again establishes him as a citizen devoted to the welfare of nation. The donation is indeed a penance for Bishupal for his misdeeds and a way to reform his moral character.

"Mogno Mainak" (1963) showcases Byomkesh's unrelenting pursuit for truth in decoding a highly complex murder case which interlaces war of espionage and political corruption. The story is set against the backdrop of post-independence era when West Bengal, as a newly formed state, was vulnerable to major social, administrative and security crisis. The government under Chief Minister Bidhan Chandra Roy struggled to restore order amidst the chaotic situation. The massive influx of refugees from East Pakistan was uncontrollable and created havoc in the state. Hena Mallik, who initially appears in the story as an orphaned refugee sheltered by Santosh Samaddar, signifies this refugee problem that put an overwhelming strain on Bengal's economy and infrastructure. The violent communal riots led to widespread killings, loots and destruction of properties that worsened the situation further. The political and social turmoil led

to rapid growth of crime which the Congress government failed to curb efficiently. On top of that Congress was engaged in factional fights marked by internal rivalry and power struggle. Many of the highly corrupt Congress politicians ignored public welfare and lacked in organised and integrated governance. Moreover, the central grants provided to the state as per Nehru's economic policies were insufficient in mitigating the needs of the people.

The fifth columnist Santosh Samaddar is a perfect example of the internal threat that inflicts heavy toll on sovereignty and security of the nation. His exceptional oratory skill as depicted through his public speeches underscores the impressive ability of contemporary politicians to woo the public, brainwash them and divert their attention from core issues or weaknesses of the ruling party. Through his character, Saradindu openly critiques the contemporary politicians of Congress who misused their ranks and powers for financial gains. Chameli Samaddar's former involvement in revolutionary activities provides a convincing explanation for the antipathy towards her husband's debauchery and malfeasance. Moreover, the blunt acknowledgement about her disbelief in the Gandhian principle of non-violence (*ahimsa*) implies a critique of the guiding vision for Congress which often proved to be impractical or ineffective on political grounds. The major breach of confidential and sensitive information delineates the frailty of the Congress government in properly safeguarding national security. Byomkesh's deep pang of regret reveals what heavy price India had to pay for the betrayal, "Consequently we were defeated at every step, we lost the territory that was rightfully ours" (my trans.; 414).

Byomkesh's utterance unfolds some crucial details about the espionage system widely prevalent during the Indo-Pak wars between 1947 and 1965. The rapid creation of ISI (Inter Service Intelligence) as a defence-oriented intelligence mechanism proved to be highly beneficial for Pakistan. India unfortunately did not have a strong external intelligence agency capable of countering the ISI and had to rely on IB (Intelligence Bureau) for both internal and external information. ISI in its early times was trained by British officers especially Major General R. Cawthorne bringing about its quick advancement and stood superior to India in covert

operations and strategic infiltration. This was more evident when Pakistan carried out 'Operation Gibraltar' (1965) aimed at provoking a local insurrection and 'Operation Grand Slam' which was successful in overwhelming the Indian forces through large-scale deployment of Pakistani armour. In the late 1950s, Pakistan was actively involved in the separatist movements of North-East India by a facilitating a secure network for Naga and Mizo insurgents. Furthermore, the failure to measure Chinese intentions during the Sino-Indian War of 1962 and the success of Pakistan led 'Operation Desert Hawk' plotted before the full-scale war of 1965 made the critical failure of Indian intelligence abundantly clear. Saradindu, through the words of Byomkesh, directly hits upon the exact weakness which prompted India to establish its strongest external intelligence agency after five years – Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) in 1968.

The activities of the spy Meena Mallik mentioned as 'demimondaine' (415) indicate the extensive use of honey trapping i.e. romantic affiliation or seduction to manipulate military personnel and political leaders into revealing sensitive information. This was very much popular as a part of intelligence operations between India and Pakistan since 1947. The original French term 'demimonde', which was used for glamorous elite women associated with espionage, perfectly fits for Meena as she lured Samaddar for both money and confidential information. Operatives from East Pakistan even functioned as refugees taking advantage of the tumultuous times of partition, which is portrayed through the character of Hena Mallik. These agents preyed upon individuals who were psychologically vulnerable and weakened in spirit. Politician Santosh Samaddar, who lacked moral restraint, was too an easy target for Meena Mallik and this infirmity is highlighted by Saradindu as a deadly blow to India's security. As Byomkesh expresses his concerns:

> Think of the situation—a political shadow war is going on. We know nothing about their secret motives, but they are aware of all our secret plans. The outcome is inevitable. (my trans.; 416)

Byomkesh's anger and disgust towards the traitor Samaddar indicates a deep-rooted patriotic conviction and an

uncompromising stance against treachery. His unshaken resolve to punish him does not waver even at the face of constant threats and intimidation. Byomkesh rightfully establishes himself as a nationalist by scorning Samaddar's offer to conceal his shameful deeds, "Even you don't have enough money to bribe me, Santoshbabu. You have betrayed your country, you are a traitor, you should be punished for that" (my trans.; 413). Byomkesh's counter-threat demonstrates the strength of will that emanates only from an ardent believer of truth. The face-off between Byomkesh and Samaddar is a larger representation of the constant strife between common men and power structures where the latter often tend to stifle the voices of the former and succeeds in crushing them under political influence. Thus, Samaddar's collapse before Byomkesh epitomizes a total reversal of the commonly encountered abuse of power and the ultimate triumph of virtue over vice. Anindita Dey opines that Saradindu's nationalist thoughts in the Byomkesh narratives are "subtle and he tactfully presents the realities of colonial India with the purpose of regenerating national culture" (101).

To conclude, Byomkesh Bakshi was "alter ego of Saradindu Bandopadhyay and his prospects in life changed as did his creator's" (Sinha 183). The intricate relation between crime and justice becomes bleary in many of his cases where Saradindu maintains "a perfect balance while interlacing a series of tales and fashioning a complex web of characters while bestowing optimal equipoise of social interests and narrative prerequisites" (Mukhopadhyay 22). For both Byomkesh and Saradindu, justice is not what is served as punishment under judicial incarceration but which truly reforms a character through penance and sacrifice. In this regard, Byomkesh as the sleuth, conveys a didactic pedagogy that offers a new perspective of 'truth' (hence 'truth-seeker' or 'satyanweshi') through his process of deductive investigation. Often, truth emerges greater than justice and justice transcends beyond the limited scope of punishment. Set in the vernacular context of both pre-colonial and post-colonial Calcutta, Byomkesh's critical success specifically depends not only on his dedication to ratiocination, but also as an inquisitor who conspicuously embraces an emotional balance between justice and truth.

Works Cited:

Bandyopadhyay, Saradindu. *Aadim Ripu*. 1955. *Saradindu Amanibus*, vol. 2, edited by Pratul Chandra Gupta, Ananda Publishers, 2024, pp. 17-102.

---. "Kahen Kobi Kalidas." 1961. *Saradindu Amanibus*, vol. 2, edited by Pratul Chandra Gupta, Ananda Publishers, 2024, pp. 281-326.

---. "Mogno Mainak." 1963. *Saradindu Amanibus*, vol. 2, edited by Pratul Chandra Gupta, Ananda Publishers, 2024, pp. 368-419.

---. "Quicksand." 1933. *Byomkesh Bakshi*, translated by Monimala Dhar, Rupa, 2023, pp. 125-76.

---. "Rakter Daag." 1956. *Saradindu Amanibus*, vol. 2, edited by Pratul Chandra Gupta, Ananda Publishers, 2024, pp. 157-187.

---. "The Rhythm of Riddles." 1964. *The Rhythm of Riddles: Three Byomkesh Bakshi Mysteries*, translated by Arunava Sinha, Puffin Books, 2012, pp. 1-36.

Brueck, Laura. "Translation/ Adaptation: The Vernacular Storyworld of Byomkesh Bakshi." *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Indian Literatures*, edited by Anjaria, Ulka and Anjali Nerlekar, Oxford UP, 2024, pp. 605-17.

Chakrabarti, Gautam. "The Bhadralok as Truth-Seeker: Towards a Social History of the Bengali Detective." *Cracow Indological Studies*, vol. 14, 2012, pp. 255-68.

Dey, Anindita. *Sherlock Holmes, Byomkesh Bakshi, and Feluda: Negotiating the Center and the Periphery*. Lexington Books, 2021.

Mukhopadhyay, Raj Raj. "When Detective seeks the Ghost: Exploring the Paranormal in Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Baroda and Byomkesh Stories." *The Contour: An International Peer-Reviewed Journal*, edited by Susanta Kumar Bardhan, vol. 5, issue 3 & 4, Jan. & Apr. 2019, pp. 16-23. 20 July 2019, https://www.thecontourejournal.com/volume-5-issue-3-4-january-april-2019/.

Roy, Pinaki. *The Manichean Investigators*. Sarup and Sons, 2008.

Sinha, Shalini R. "Byomkesh Bakshi Stories – Saradindu Bandopadhyay's Anticolonial Resistance to the 'White Cultural Imperialism' of Sherlock Holmes and Hercule Poirot Stories." IIS University J. A., vol. 12, 2023, pp. 175-87. 15 Apr. 2026, https://iisjoa.org/sites/default/files/iisjoa/October_November_2023/14th%20Paper.pdf .